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than usual.[1] For a month before the appearance of the *beta* the children play a game called *tipuli*, which is almost the exact equivalent of our tug-of-war. The "rope" is a heavy vine from the bush, and the children at each end pull until one side gives way. A few nights before the *beta* is expected the adults also engage in this game, playing it a bit more seriously than the children, for whom it sometimes becomes a frolic. The natives say that the game symbolizes the pulling in of the *beta* from the sea.[2]

The *beta* was sighted by a young girl who, with other children, was on the reef that night looking for shell-fish. She cried out that the *beta* had come, and immediately there was much excitement. Everyone, men and women, rushed to the beach and out to the reef with their baskets, where they stayed for several hours gathering in the *beta*. When finally all the worms had been gathered in the baskets, everyone went to bed exhausted. But at daybreak they were up and bathing in the sea. They said that if they did not bathe in the sea after taking in the *beta*, their bodies would be marked with rings similar to those on the *beta*. On this occasion they should have bathed the night before, as soon as they finished getting in the *beta*, but they were too tired then, and had gone directly to bed, postponing the bathing until daybreak.[3]

The day following the catching of the *beta* was a busy one.

[1] The same marine annelid is found in other parts of the Pacific, particularly in the Samoan, Tongan, and Fijian groups. In Fiji it is called the *mbalolo*, and is found in October or November. These two months take their names from it, October being known as *Little Mbalolo*, and November as *Great Mbalolo*. Thompson, Basil, *The Fijians*, 1928. London, Wm. Heineman, pp. 324–327.

In a similar way at Lesu the names for certain months take their name from the *beta* (see p. 290).

[2] Because the *beta* appeared earlier than expected, the adults had not played the game of *tipuli*, and the children had only been playing it for four days.

[3] Ambwa, the next village, had no *beta*, for no one had sighted it. Having come a month earlier than expected, they had no look-out for it.

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527 It had to be cooked and taro had to be prepared to be eaten with it. Late in the day the men carried the baked *beta* and taro to the cemetery, where they had a feast. The women ate the *beta* on the beach, or at home, wherever they happened to be, and not in any communal fashion. It was considered a great delicacy and much enjoyed. Its appearance, catching, cooking, and eating was a noteworthy occasion in the everyday life of the community.

226 789 834 Shark-fishing is set off from other fishing because magic is a very integral part of it, because it is surrounded by many sexual taboos, and because it is a dangerous undertaking. A man is supposed to be sexually continent for a month before he goes shark-fishing, and should his wife be pregnant he cannot go at all. Four or five men may go out on an expedition, but only one man, the leader of the expedition, makes the magic, which is supposed to be effective for all of them. If a man does not know the proper magic he will pay another who does know it to lead the expedition for him. The shark belongs to the leader, and the others are paid with *tsera* for their share in the enterprise.

226 789 The implements for catching the shark are a large rattle made of shells, a *kut*, which is a curved piece of wood with a loop of rope in the centre, through which the shark is held fast, and a thick stick made of hard wood, *gula*, used to knock it over the head. While essential, these are only a part of the equipment. It is magic which is used to inaugurate the expedition and in every succeeding stage.

Very early in the morning the man who knows the shark magic brings his canoe to that part of the beach where there are no houses, and there places it on the sand lengthwise, with the outrigger seaward. He then makes a little fire on the beach by the side of the canoe, passes the *bungla* leaf through the fire, and recites a spell as he moves the leaf slowly over the canoe.

This particular shark magic came from Medina, and

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435 a scale of value which does not vary, but in the case of pigs,
556 where there is variation, the social incentive is not to pay the least amount, but rather to pay the biggest price and increase one's prestige thereby.

437 Pigs are the most usual objects of trade, and so we will
527 consider their buying and selling in detail. They are almost always purchased in connection with some ritual feast—mortuary, marriage, etc. If it is a very large ritual feast, such as a *malanggan* one, preparations are begun a long time in advance. Perhaps ten months before the rite a preliminary feast will be held to make the arrangements. At this time the buyers and sellers of pigs for the future feast are designated. The man who will buy a pig gives a bundle of baked sago to the man who will later sell it to him. But this does not happen haphazardly at the feast, and for a week before one such feast which I witnessed the men were busy every evening discussing the details of the arrangements.

437 Then months later, when the ritual feast is held, the pigs are there and payment is made for them after the feast is over. When the men come out of the cemetery, where most feasts are held, the sale is concluded before all the men and women of the community assembled in the open compound. The man making the payment holds up a string of *tsera* and makes a short speech, naming the person to whom he is paying it. The *tsera* is held outstretched, one man at each end, so that everyone can see the amount. It is then handed over to the man or woman who sold the pig. Payments for all objects, such as fishing-nets, ornaments, etc., are always made in public in this manner, for which the natives give two reasons. First, everyone has witnessed the transaction and seen that it is all right; secondly, everyone knows what has been paid for the object, and should the owner want to resell it, he must get the same amount. It is a registration of the transaction. There is thus no buying or selling for profit.

432 Objects are always resold for exactly what they cost, and

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Around food also is focused much of the prestige of an individual in his family. Here a man's standing is largely dependent upon his ability as a food provider and the woman's upon her industry in preparing the food. Failure on the part of either partner to fulfill these obligations is sufficient cause for a divorce.

Social Organization

Before describing the feasts and showing the way in which much of life centers around food, it is necessary to give a very brief description of the essentials of the social organization. There are two exogamous moieties, the Eagle and the Hawk, which are subdivided into clans. Descent is matrilineal, the clan consisting of an extended family, all related through the female line. The next kinship unit in order of size is the individual family, which may be monogamous, is frequently polygamous, and occasionally polyandric.

On the basis of locality the largest unit is the village. In the district where I lived there are five villages forming one linguistic unit. This is not and never has been, as far as I could observe, a political unit. In the past, warfare was frequent between the villages and there neither was nor is one chief for all of them, each having its own. The village is subdivided into hamlets,—Lesu into fifteen. Residence is matrilocal and so a hamlet will usually have many female members of the same clan. The hamlet has from two to seven or eight houses, each one having its communal cooking ground and generally a cook house also, for use on rainy days. With the exception of the very small ones, a hamlet has its own cemetery and men's house.

The society is agricultural. Gardening, fishing, hunting wild pigs, and cooking are the main everyday occupations. Trading is important and carried on according to exact and traditional rules. The familiar Melanesian gift-exchange is also practiced.

Frequency of Feasts

After living in this society for only a short time, one is impressed by the great frequency of feasts. The following is a list of occasions on which they are held.

Occasion	Name
Pregnancy	ɑnɪng asɪl tsɛgɣ (eating for infant)
Birth	Grɪmɣsi (name of dance performed by women at this rite)
Giving name to infant	Basisis (name)
Several months after birth if infant is strong	ɑnɪng asɪl wɔtwɔt tsegɣ (eating for strong infant)

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At appearance of first tooth	ɑnːng asːl nuji (eating for tooth)
After ritual washing of a girl at her first menstruation	tsːɛ tsːl (name of leaf used in washing)
Marriage	mɑrːl (name of playful fighting occurring between women of opposite moieties at this time)
Circumcision	Lual ːnγ tsːɛ saukγ (feast for cutting penis)
Recovery from illness	Bis Bambull γ (make taro die[4])
Going away a long distance	ɑnːng atγbasiγɑp (eat and go)
Feast at death	Kosːɛrγ lual (Make feast)
Feast some time after death has occurred	Kosːɛrγ lual mau tungän (free translation: make feast for dead; literally, implies feast is held on ground where men are buried)
Malanggon[5] rites	Kosːɛrγ lual (make feast)
To make arrangements for future malanggon rites	äginlɛnːɛ bul (mark pig)
To end quarrel	ɛlːembii (finish)
Before war[6]	Lual tanta bul mɑrːl (feast to bring fight)
To make peace between warring villages	ɛlːembii (finish)
Feast given for possible mates of female infants	ɑnːng tsːng tsːl (eating play)
When there is abundance of food	ɒnγnːn aLːt (food much)
To repay women who helped an ill woman	ɑnːng oba (eating, communal work)
To repay workers on a house or garden fence	ɑnːng oba (eating, communal work)
At completion of my house[6a]	ɾsːali anuγ (open house)

During the ten months of my visit I attended eighty-five feasts, a large majority of which took place in the village of Lesu. The others occurred in neighboring villages, but were also attended by Lesu people.[7]

The eighty-five feasts fall into the following classes:

Feasts at death	9

[4] The tops of this taro are thrown away and not replanted as is usually the case.

[5] Malanggon is the name of an elaborate carving displayed at certain mortuary rites.

[6] Warfare has been abolished by the mandated government and the feasts connected with it are therefore no longer held. The feast before war and the one to make peace between warring villages are the only ones on the list which were not held during my visit.

[6a] This feast was called by a different name from the one ordinarily used to repay the workers on a native house, and is really an introduced element in the culture.

[7] Not included in this number is the communal eating on the part of the men every day for several weeks after a death. These might well be considered ritual feasts, but I have included only those which mark a very specific occasion, such as those in the foregoing list.

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After death feasts 32
Nineteen of this number were connected with the display of malanggons.
Circumcision rites[8] 8
In payment for economic services 5
These were to repay workers who had built a house or made a garden fence.
Women's feasts 11
Those at which the women eat or where the food is distributed to them. The latter is the more frequent occurrence. The men do not eat at the women's feasts. They may be further analyzed as follows: birth, 4; pregnancy, 1; circumcision, 1; menstruation, 1; marriage, 1; malanggon,[9] 1; end of dance rehearsals, 1; payment to women who had helped a sick woman of opposite moiety, 1.
Miscellaneous feasts 20
These are subdivided as follows: abundance of some particular food, 9; baby cutting his first tooth, 1; giving of name to infant, 1; recovery from illness, 2; settlement of quarrel, 1; because infant is strong, 1; for possible mates of infant, 1; end of folk-tale telling period, 1; for my departure, 1; for my servant's departture, 1; just sociability, 1.

At the far end of the village, other minor feasts probably occurred which I did not record or witness. The number of people attending ranged from twenty to five hundred.

Preparations for a Feast

Preparing for a feast is a communal enterprise. Early in the morning of the feast, or the day before if it is a big one, the women of the hamlet, village, or several villages, depending on the size of the feast, bring their taro to the communal cooking ground or cook house.[10] They and the girls old enough to be of assistance immediately begin the work of scraping and preparing the taro to be baked. Their only implement is a shell called 'sip, with which they scrape the skin from the taro. The scraped taro is then wrapped in leaves. The women are quite ingenious in cooking, and there are a number of ways in which this general method is varied. Shredded coconut may be added, or the taro may be cut in a certain manner, or the inside may be scooped out, etc. The women sit in a group on the ground, working busily and seriously. A few men are off on one side tending to the liga, a pile of hot stones on which the food is to be baked. A fire is made to heat the

[8] At these circumcision rites malanggons were displayed. So the rites really had a double function—mortuary and circumcision.

[9] Men ate at this feast, too, but separately from the women.

[10] The principal foods are taro, fish, crabs, pigs, bananas, coconuts, and pawpaws, supplemented by yams, sago, turtle, etc. Taro is the staple article of diet, and its preparation is the main work both of family meals and feasts.